

U.S. Military Academy - Officer's Quarters

HABS No. NY-5708-2

(Commandant's Quarters)

Southwest of the junction of Washington, Parke and
Jefferson Roads; at northwest corner of the Parade Ground

U.S. Military Academy

West Point

Orange County

New York

HABS
No.

30-6280

1/2 -

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HABS
NY
36-4385
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY - OFFICER'S QUARTERS
(COMMANDANT'S QUARTERS)

LOCATION:

Southwest of the juncture of Washington, Parke and Jefferson Roads; at the northwest corner of the Parade Ground, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, Orange County, New York.

USGS West Point Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinate: 18.586960.4582760.

PRESENT OWNER
AND OCCUPANT:

U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.

PRESENT USE:

Single family housing for the post commandant.

SIGNIFICANCE:

These quarters, together with those just south of them, are the oldest extant structures at the Academy. The house retains much of its original Federal Style details. The house is now traditionally associated with the commandant of the post.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1821 (Williams's Facilities Report)
2. Architect: Unknown. Presumably the Army Quartermaster's office.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.
4. Builder: Unknown. Presumably the post Quartermaster's office.
5. Original plans and construction: A drawing from 1842, sent by Superintendent Delafield from West Point to Washington, depicts the building's original plan (see Supplemental Material). This plan and its additions are confirmed by Williams's Facilities Report of 1889:

"Quarters No. 25. A brick building, facing the parade, two stories high, with a veranda extending along its front, was erected in 1821 at a cost unknown. This building is occupied by one field office, and contains rooms as follows:

1st floor: Front parlor, 17 ft. 5 in. x 17 ft. 5 in. x 10 ft. 4 in.; back parlor, 16 ft. x 17 ft. 5 in. x 10 ft. 4 in.; dining room, 14 ft. 2 in x 19 ft. 2 in. x 10 ft. 6 in.;

butler's pantry, 10 ft. 8 in. x 10 ft. 4 in x 10 ft. 6 in.;
kitchen, 12 ft. x 18 ft. x 9 ft.

2nd floor: Bedroom, 15 ft. x 16 ft. x 9 ft. 5 in; bedroom,
13 ft. 10 in x 16 ft. 8 in. x 9 ft. 5 in.; bedroom, 14 ft. x
19 ft. x 8 ft. 10 in.; bedroom, 8 ft. x 10 ft. x 9 ft. 5 in.;
bathroom, 9 ft. 9 in. x 11 ft. 5 in. x 9 ft. 5 in.

Attic: 2 bedrooms, each 10 ft. 9 in. x 17 ft. 10 in. x 6 ft.
10 in.; bedroom, 7 ft. 3 in. x 9 ft. 6 in.

Basement: Laundry, 16 ft. x 16 ft. 3 in. x 7 ft. 2 in.;
furnace room, 17 ft. x 22 ft. x 7 ft. 2 in.; storeroom,
15 ft. 4 in. x 16 ft. 8 in. x 7 ft. 2 in."

6. Alterations and additions: Bethanie C. Grashof's Building Analyses and Preservation Guidelines gives a schematic development plan (see Supplemental Material) and this chronological key to additions:

- A Original Building
1821
source: Record Series #280
Post Facilities Report, 1889. Submitted
by Captain Charles W. Williams. Sometimes
called Letterbook (hereafter cited as
Williams, Facilities Report.) p. 59
- B First Porch
1855 - 1861
source: photo-- PL 100-a
photo-- PL 100-a
- B' Present Porch
1896 - 1909
source: A Wittemann, U.S. Military Academy, West Point,
N.Y., Photo-Gravures, (New York: The Abertype Co.,
1896), (hereafter cited as Wittemann,
Photo-Gravures).
- C Dining Room Addition
1867, see PL 101-b
source: Superintendent's Letterbooks
U.S. Military Academy Archives
- D Kitchen Addition
prior to 1889
source: Williams, Facilities Report. Space is
accounted for in building by building description.
- E Brick Addition
prior to 1889
source: Williams, Facilities Report. Space is accounted
for in building by building description.

- F Brick Addition
 1889-1896
 source: Williams, Facilities Report. Space is accounted
 for in building by building description.
 photo- Wittemann, Photo-Gravures
- G Bath Addition
 1896 - 1929-32
 source: photo- Wittemann, Photo-Gravures
- H Addition
 1936--originally a single-story enclosed porch.
 source: USMA Planning Department -- DR #2443R

 1946--second floor bedroom added
 source: USMA Planning Department -- DR #4206

 1961--porch incorporated into rear parlor
 source: USMA Planning Department -- DR #6784
- I Kitchen Enlarged
 1936
 source: USMA Planning Department -- DR #2442

The preceding section and its associated sketch plan give the additions and their dates. Changes to the interior were most extensive in the twentieth century, occurring in 1936, 1946, 1961 and 1976.

Alterations in 1936 were confined to the rear of the first floor. This included the enlargement of the kitchen by extending its north wall approximately seven feet; the conversion of the old pantry into a maid's room; the creation of a new pantry; the construction of a new porch south of the maid's room; a new closet between the dining room and the kitchen; and miscellaneous alterations to doors and windows associated with the above changes. For details consult drawings in Facilities Engineer's Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S.M.A.

Major alterations in the 1940s, with the exception of a new west kitchen porch, were confined to the second floor. A new dressing room (12' x 14') was built over the 1946 porch, opening the southwest bedroom to the west. The study at the stair landing received a new south doorway into the dressing room where a window had been. The window was reused in the dressing room, just as the two west bedroom windows were also reused. New windows (2) at this time were cut into the south wall of the master bedroom and to the west of the fireplace in the north bedroom.

Alterations in 1971 involved rather extensive remodelling to the entire interior. In the basement this included new sheetrock partitions, new doors and doorways, a new suspended ceiling, new windows and insulation. First floor alterations include the removal of original lath and plaster and its replacement with sheetrock in the passage and in the two original rooms; a new sub-floor and oak floor in the dining room; new paneling under the stairway; a new handrail for the stairway; new windowsills for the east room; removal of the chair rail, panel trim and wallpaper in the dining room; and the removal of a wall section between the living room and the porch enclosed in 1936.

Second floor alterations include the removal of old plaster in the stairhall; the enclosure of a doorway in the bedroom converted from the study; and miscellaneous changes to closets and the three bathrooms.

Third floor alterations were confined to modernizing the bathroom and to replacing the sash in the two north windows.

Alterations in 1976 consisted of a kitchen remodelling with the removal of the 1936 pantry walls and a new window on the south.

B. Historical Context:

For the historical and architectural context of this set of quarters within the overall development of West Point see U.S. Military Academy, HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 2: "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Quarters 101 retains its Federal style exterior form despite later additions and porches. The interior is a combination of Federal, Victorian and modern details.
2. Condition of the fabric: With the exception of moisture problems on the south elevation and a structural crack on the west elevation, the building is in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This two-and-a-half story house has one and two story wings on the north, south and west. The original three bay facade (east) now has six bays, and has been expanded from 27' to 68' (approximate); the north-south elevation measures 60' (approximate). The basement extends under the original block and the dining room wing.
2. Foundations: Random laid ashlar granite forms the foundation walls which are 2'-0" thick in the original section and 1'-9" thick for the dining room addition. These walls extend above grade and are coped with a cut stone watertable of a brown color. The porch added on the west side has a concrete foundation.
3. Walls: Walls are brick in a Flemish Bond on the facade and 5-course American on the other elevations. The exterior walls and trim have been painted white.
4. Structural systems: Structural systems consist of load-bearing brick walls, wooden joists and a common rafter roof. Brick exterior walls (main block) measure 1'-8" on the first floor (Flemish Bond facade; 1'-3" first floor side walls; 1'-9" second floor (facade); 1'-2" second floor (side); and 11" on the third floor.

5. Porches: The principal wooden porch on the facade has paired columns, an entablature and a balustrade. This originally measured approximately 10'-6" x 27' but was extended south and west with a 9'-6" x 28' section. This later section is screened and has single wooden columns and a side door. The enclosed kitchen porch on the west, rebuilt in 1944, is frame. A comparison of photographs from the U.S.M.A. Special Collections shows the principal porch in its original form with different posts, different balusters and a different entablature with outriggers. (PL 101-b ca. 1871 and Stockman Collection, 683 S, early twentieth century).
6. Chimneys: Two rectangular gable-end chimneys on the south wall serve the original block. These have simple corbelled caps. The third chimney is on the north wall of the north wing and serves the dining room and a bedroom. This chimney has an almost straight top although an earlier photograph indicates that its cap was corbelled at one time.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Exterior doors are not original. The principal east doorway has a rectangular transom window.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows in the original main block are 6 over 6 double-hung sash. For the most part, windows in the various additions are also double-hung sash. Original windows and those of some additions have louvered shutters.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The original house and its north wing addition have gable roofs covered with slate and standing seam tin respectively. The other additions have shed roofs of standing seam tin or a composition material.
 - b. Cornice: A simple box gutter with downspouts forms most of the cornices although hung gutters are found in some areas.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Basement: The original basement (see schematic original plan sketch, Supplemental Material) was expanded to include the north wing and a narrow room and a bathroom across the west side.

First Floor: Using the schematic plan, Part A is the original house; its present plan is unchanged from the original plan. Part C is the dining room which has a serving pantry separating it from the kitchen (I). The kitchen is now undivided, occupying all of Parts D and I. Part E is used as a small breakfast room. Part H has been made into a type of sunroom and is an extension of the west parlor. Part F is a bedroom and Part G is its bathroom.

Second Floor: The original part of the second floor still corresponds to the plan sketch from 1842; two closets and a bathroom occupy the space dividing the two bedrooms in this area and a bathroom occupies the room at the east end of the passage. A bedroom is located over Part C of the Schematic Plan and the room over Part E is now a study but has also been used as a bedroom. The area over Part H is a dressing room off of the master bedroom.

Third Floor: The attic floor contains two small rooms, a bathroom, hall and two storage areas.

2. Stairways: The principal stairway to the second floor is a dog-leg form with an intermediate landing. The balustrade received a new handrail in 1961. The other stairway from the first to the second floor was a servant stair added with the north dining room wing. This ascends in a straight run from a small vestibule off of the kitchen. The principal stairway continues from the second to the third floor in a similar dog-leg manner. The stairway to the basement is located under the principal stairway and is reached through the service stair vestibule.
3. Flooring: Floors are hardwood, covered with carpeting in many places. The kitchen, breakfast room and bathrooms have linoleum floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Most, if not all, of the original lath and plaster has been replaced by sheetrock. Wood lath (cut) and horsehair plaster still exists in the south room of the third floor. Original cornices and baseboards still remain in the front and rear parlors, the dining room and the south wing; this trim is different according to the respective date of construction. Wainscoting and the chair rail have been lost in the dining room. The dining room features a West Point scene wallpaper on its west wall (date unknown).
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Doorways in the parlors and dining room have retained original trim from their respective periods. The doorway from the rear parlor to the passage was enlarged into a double opening without doors sometime after 1961. The most elaborate interior openings are the archway with pilasters in the passage and the 1867 doorway from the passage to the dining room (see HABS photograph). Door and window casings in the passage appear to be later replacements. The absence of doors between the parlors raises the possibility that they might have been removed at some early date.
 - b. Windows: Windows in the front parlor retain a symmetrical Federal style trim that matches that of the doorways. Original window locations seem to be inconsistent with the 1842 plans. Various other window trim in the original section has been altered or replaced. Window trim on the second floor of the original section is very plain. The dining room addition on both floors has its 1867 trim and interior folding shutters. Original interior folding shutters are painted shut in the first floor parlor and in the front bedroom on the second floor.

6. Decorative features and trim: Decorative mantels include a Federal period mantel in the front parlor and marble Victorian mantels in all other locations except for a Victorian wooden mantel in the 1889-1896 addition. These Victorian marble mantels are similar to ones at the Superintendent's Quarters. The bedroom fireplace over the dining room also has a coal grate. The dining room features a plaster ceiling medallion.
7. Hardware: There is no notable hardware.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: In 1961, a "Walvector" convector heating system was established.
 - b. Lighting: There are no original fixtures remaining.
 - c. Plumbing: All plumbing systems are modern.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Commandant's Quarters faces east toward the Battle Monument and the Thayer Monument in the northwest corner of the Parade Ground. Situated in a row of early quarters, the Commandant's Quarters is between the Superintendent's Quarters (HABS NY-5708-1) to the south and the Dean's Quarters (HABS NY-5708-3) to the north. To the west is the Gymnasium (HABS NY-5708-43) and two garages belonging to the Superintendent's Quarters, U.S.M.A. 723 and 725.

Shrubs have been planted close to the house on all elevations. An early twentieth-century photograph of the house (U.S.M.A. Archives, Stockbridge 683) shows a large deciduous tree and a coniferous tree in the front yard which do not survive. Deciduous trees are planted in both the front and rear yards. A simple, open-sided gazebo sits in the rear yard southwest of the house.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: Original drawings are not known to exist. A plan from 1842 is reproduced in the supplemental section. Alteration drawings are in the Facilities Engineer's Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S.M.A.
- B. Early Views: Early photographs can be found in the U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. Some of these are reproduced in the Grashof and Lange volumes of this project.
- C. Bibliography:
 1. Primary and unpublished sources:
Records, U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections.

See bibliographic essay in the Lange volume of this project for a listing of record groups.

Williams, Captain Charles W. "Post Facilities Report," 1889.
U.S. Military Academy Archives

2. Secondary and published sources:

Annual Reports, U.S. Military Academy Archives

Grashof, Bethanie C. "Building Analysis and Preservation Guidelines for Category I and selected Category II Buildings at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.

Lange, Robie S. "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: National Archives, Washington, D.C.
A further search of the U.S. Military Academy Archives might yield more information.

E. Supplemental Material:

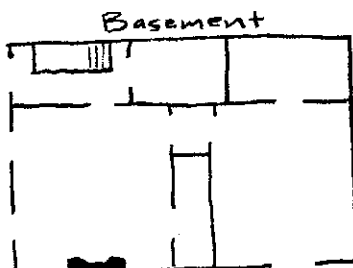
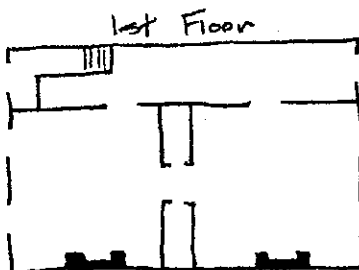
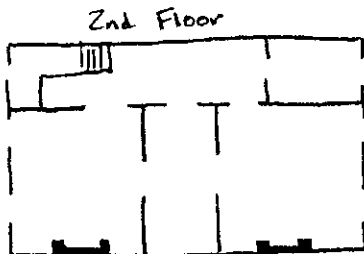
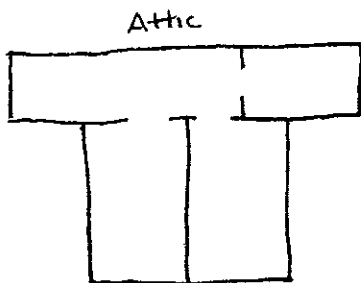
1. 1842 plan of Quarters 101 by Richard Delafield from the National Archives, reproduced from Grashof, HABS No. NY-5708.
2. Schematic development plan of Quarters 101 reproduced from Grashof, HABS No. NY-5708.

E. Supplemental Material

1. 1842 Plan of Quarters 101. Reproduced from Grashof, HABS No. NY-5708.

Officer's Quarters
H.A.B.S. No. NY-5708-2

Original Plan



Taken from

"Plan of all the quarters at West Point occupied by the officers and professors of the Military Academy in Feb. 1842.- forwarded with the letter of the 10 Feb. 1842 by Richard Delafield, Major of the Engineers, Superintendent of the Military Academy."

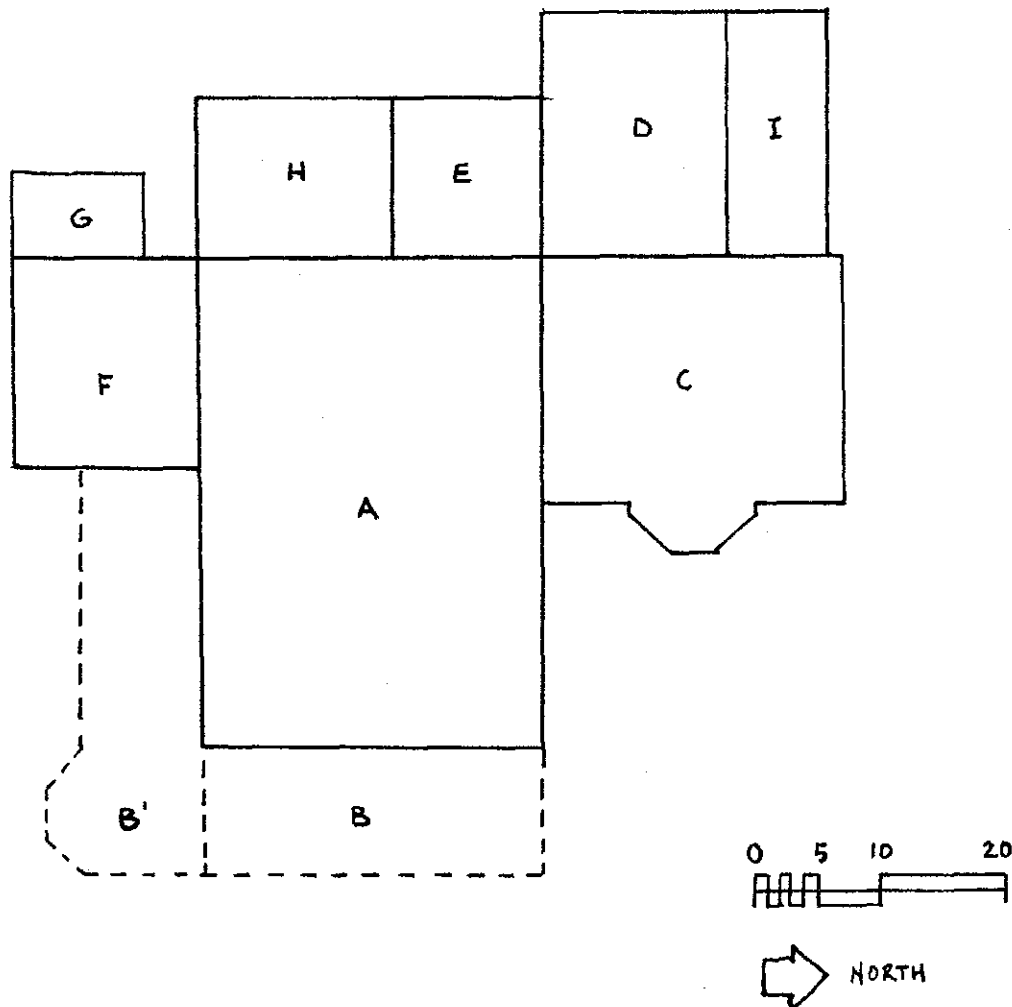
Drawer 32, Sheet 25
Fortifications File-- U.S. Military Academy West Point, (NY)
Record Group 77-- Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers
Cartographic and Architectural Branch
National Archives, Washington, D.C.

E. Supplemental Material

2. Schematic Plan of Quarters 101. Reproduced from Grashof, HABS No. NY-5708.

Officer's Quarters
H.A.B.S. No. NY-5708-2

Schematic Plan
Bethanie C. Grashof



PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation is part of a multi-year project sponsored by the National Park Service and the United States Military Academy, explained in the U.S. Military Academy, HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 1, "Methodology." This written documentation was prepared by Travis C. McDonald, Jr., architectural historian, in 1982-1985, based on fieldwork conducted in 1982.